SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

Saron's Mission: ***Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!***

Joe Ulrey, Saron Congregational Council President
Cell: 313-718-2563
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Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com

Irma Gorman, Organist

Ken Boyd, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org

Sara Porter, Childcare Specialist
Email: portersara20@gmail.com

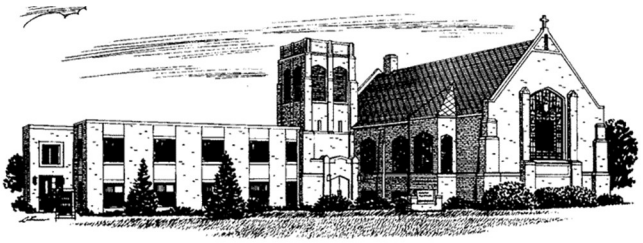
Typical Sunday at Saron:

Summer (began **May 26**):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

Fall, Winter and Spring (begins **Sept 8**):
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40am Learning Hour for Ages 3-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia



PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR AUGUST 2024

I write this well aware it is my last pastor's article before retirement, although Amanda has promised me I can have a little space next month :-) With less than two weeks to go, I find myself with "big feelings." They are the feelings of sadness, excitement, joy, grief and a whole bunch of others. It depends on the day and the moment. But overwhelmingly, I am filled with gratitude. (Note - tears are starting.) Gratitude that comes from a place of love for you my dear, faithful Saron community and our work together; for supportive colleagues and synod, for the joy of community partners, the encouragement of family and so much more. I will miss you dearly as your pastor, but I know that we are united in the gift for which I am most thankful, that of our loving Savior.

As I was planning for our worship on July 28, I came across a choir number that combines my love for the tune of Finlandia and my "big feelings" of thanksgiving. Marcus was kind enough to have the choir prepare it to be sung for our last Sunday as pastor/parishioner. I leave it with you now.

Thanks Be to God
Words by Sheldon Curry

There is a hand whose touch creates all beauty:
The snow capped height, the river's quiet flow.
And that same hand, which fashioned all creation
calms troubled hearts and soothes the wounded soul.
Thanks be to God whose mercy knows no measure,
whose righteous way His wondrous works applaud.

There is a Shepherd for each valley's shadow;
Unfathomed grace joins ev'ry trial we meet.
God's loving kindness bears our every weakness;
for such a sure and steadfast love is He.

Give thanks to God for faithful friends and family,
Those near and far whose lives define our own.
And praise God's goodness past all comprehension;
God is our source, our pleasure, and our home.
Thanks be to God whose mercy knows no measure,
Whose righteous way His wondrous works applaud!
Thanks be to God! Thanks be to God! Thanks be to God!

- Pastor Joan

General Information

OFFICE HOURS

Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 9am-noon
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:00am-11am (approx)
Ken Boyd (Bookkeeper):
Tuesday Mornings and by Appointment

If you or your loved one is need of a visit or pastoral care, please contact Ed Staude. He will get you in touch with the correct person. Ed's contact info is 636/288-1016 or staude.edmund@gmail.com.

Other questions or concerns during the pastoral transition can be addressed to the appropriate council member or liaison:
President - Joe Ulrey
Vice President - Fran Bolson
Secretary - Claudia Staude
Treasurer - Ed Brunner
Worship - Erik Bergh (or Krin Jurgensen, Worship Chair)
Learning - Fran Bolson or Claudia Staude
Outreach - Sally Schmuhl or Jim Manore
Facilities - Steve Cook or Ed Brunner
Youth - Chuck Knebl
Support - Jim Manore (or Don Hafer, Support Chair)
Hospitality - Chuck Knebl

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Tom Taylor is at Caretel in St. Joseph;
John Olson is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

8/1 Bradley Gorman
8/2 Joseph Ulrey
8/3 Ted Dosch
8/3 Tim Standen
8/4 Linda Huff
8/5 Emma Dipert
8/5 Brian Hohman
8/6 Nicholas Hooper
8/7 Edward Standen
8/8 Matilda Danielsky
8/9 Benjamin Baumgartner
8/9 Molly Hooper
8/9 Mary Smart
8/14 Asher de la Foret
8/14 Maggie Hammer
8/15 Dave Bailey
8/16 Tedd Gorman
8/18 Easton Bommarito
8/22 Irma Gorman
8/23 Andy Huff
8/24 Paula Risetter
8/24 Rebecca Sherry
8/26 Elizabeth Kunkel
8/27 Pam Olson

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

8/1 Matthew & Laurel Gacek
8/7 Nicole & Victor Coar
8/7 Brad & Marilyn Frey
8/15 T.J. & John Koehler
8/24 Jack & Cheryl Houser

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

CONGRATULATIONS

Pastor Joan and Jim recently added to their family again with the arrival of a little one to their daughter Alissa and son-in-law Aaron. As this is a pre-adoptive placement, they are not legally allowed to post any identifying facts on social media, thus the covered face in the picture. We pray that the placement becomes permanent. Congratulations to all!

Our best wishes to Saron's former intern, Patrick Blanchard, who graduates with his Master of Divinity degree at the end of August. If you'd like to send Patrick a note, please contact the church office for more information. Patrick is making the choice not to seek ordination at this time but looks forward to plenty of volunteer opportunities and preaching at his home congregation in Arizona. Congratulations, Patrick! We were honored to be a small part of your journey!

We were honored to welcome Mary Zylema, George & Scout (not pictured) Daley, Stacy Graves and Susan Mauney as new members of Saron's congregation on July 14. We are so blessed to have you!

Piper Gray-Roll & Christopher Gaspari partook in their first Communion on July 21, 2024. Welcome to the table, Piper & Christopher!

FORTIFY & fly

Nature is amazing…until it isn't. After years of dealing with its debris clogging the drainage system for the roof, we are saying goodbye to one of the trees in the courtyard, close to the building. Also, it looks like the painting in the sanctuary and narthex should start in late September/early October! We've also received supplies in anticipation of converting one of the current gender specific restrooms into a family restroom. Upgrades are also happening in the sacristy (the little room in the front of the sanctuary) to better utilize the space and allow for easier washing of the communion ware. Improved external building signage is still on the list as well.

We will continue to provide updates until all projects are complete and all the money has been responsibly spent.

Worship

NEW: ASSISTED HEARING DEVICES

Our new sound system in the sanctuary came with headphones to assist those having difficulty hearing the worship service. If you are interested, ask Marcus if you can try one out.

SENSORY BAGS

As part of extending an unconditional welcome to all, we have Sensory Bags available for use. These bags contain a variety of fidgets that can help someone feel more able to sit quietly and/or focus. We also have noise canceling headphones for those who are sound sensitive. These brightly colored bags can be found in the narthex.

PRAYER GROUP

You are invited to offer your prayer petitions (concerns or thanksgivings) via our attendance cards each Sunday. Requests can also be made online via a link in our Thursday email. You may include as much, or little, detail as you wish. Requests are then given to the Monday prayer group. **You are invited to be part of this Monday group at 11am.** We follow a simple format of morning prayer and insert the petitions and prayers for Saron's ministry and the world. You don't even have to pray aloud, if you would prefer to pray quietly. Most weeks we are done in 30 minutes.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by contacting the church office. Please note any occasion/thanksgiving to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Checks are payable to Saron with "Flowers" as the memo. Take them home to enjoy then **simply return the vase to Saron.**

Nursery

Nursery service is available during worship. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex, including clipboards with coloring pages and children's bulletins. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage sharing concerns and suggestions.

We are always looking for additional helpers to share the load. Contact Marilyn Lucy (269/759-3464) with questions or interest.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

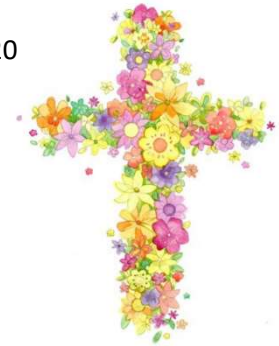
As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

August 4: 11th Sunday after Pentecost
Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15
Psalm 78:23-29
Ephesians 4:1-16
John 6:24-35

August 11: 12th Sunday after Pentecost
1 Kings 19:4-8
Psalm 34:1-8
Ephesians 4:25-5:2
John 6:35, 41-51

August 18: 13th Sunday after Pentecost
Proverbs 9:1-6
Psalm 34:9-14
Ephesians 5:15-20
John 6:51-58

August 25: 14th Sunday after Pentecost
Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18
Psalm 34:15-22
Ephesians 6:10-20
John 6:56-69



YOUTH GROUP

This group typically meets once per month after the late service for food, fun and fellowship. Friends are always welcome! **Contact Scott at scottgaspari@outlook.com with any questions or to be added to the email list.**

ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

Our group of 4 teens and 3 adults traveled to the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans on Monday, July 15, and spent the week with 16,000 other high school age youth and their adult leaders. They explored the city and culture, attended Mass Gatherings at the Smoothie King Arena, and broke into smaller groups for a regional worship and Bible study. They will share their favorite moments and more about the theme: *Created to Be* at a worship in August. Thank you so much to our generous congregation for allowing this group to have an experience they will remember forever!

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

We have many educational options to fit your needs and schedule. Always feel welcome to join us, at any time and for as many sessions as works for you.

SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

Our program year will begin again on September 8. We have opportunities for many ages and stages!

The Sunday Learning Hour (9:40am-10:30am) offers the following options:

- Preschool - Grade 5: Sunday School
- Grades 6-8: Confirmation Classes
- High School - Adult: Adult Forum

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The Thursday morning Bible study is preparing for their fall study, which begins **September 12**, entitled *Joseph, the Journey to Forgiveness*. Cost of the book is $12. Let Colleen Lundgren know as soon as possible if you need a book. New participants are always welcome. The class runs weekly from **9:30am-11am**.

From the website: *This six-week study explores what God has to say to us about grace and forgiveness through Joseph's story of trial and triumph found in Genesis 37-50. As we study his dreams, his betrayers, his dysfunctional family, his struggle to forgive, and his journey toward reconciliation, we'll find truths that echo into our own personal situations as well as practical help for answering common questions, such as:*

- *How do I stop dwelling on the hurt?*
- *Is forgiving someone excusing what happened?*
- *When will I stop having to re-forgive?*
- *Is there a difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?*
- *How can I forgive and still set boundaries?*
- *Is it ever okay not to forgive?*

Until then, we will continue to meet outside in the parking lot, with a focus on the lessons of the week. Bring a chair and a Bible. We'll move inside as weather dictates.

TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

For August, we will continue our week-to-week studies. The primary focus for each week will be the lessons and Gospel reading for the following Sunday but we will try to mix in a relevant video or other current topic here and there. Hope you can join us!

We meet Tuesday evenings at 6pm in the upstairs lounge for one hour then adjourn to a local restaurant for food and fellowship. All are welcome!

If you have any questions, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

This group will take a break for the summer and begin again in September. We typically meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month. Everyone is welcome.

Contact Ed Staude at 636/288-1016 with any questions.

We start meeting again on Sunday, August 4, at 6:30pm in the lounge. *The Housekeepers* by Alex Hay is the book up for discussion.

> *"The night of London's grandest ball, a group of women led by housekeeper Mrs. King, plot a daring heist against Mayfair society in this dazzling historical novel about power, gender and class."* (Amazon)

It's a good finish for any summer reading you are doing. Then keep in mind our September 1 selection, *All the Broken Places* by John Boyne.

> *"Immersive and chilling, the story moves back and forth between 91-year-old Gretel Fernsby's comfortable life in London to her girlhood in Germany. Now faced with a chance to save a young boy from evil, she will be forced to reveal secrets she's spent a lifetime protecting."* (Amazon)

Please join us! We have good discussions and all are welcome anytime a book piques your interest. With questions or to be added to the email list, contact Kathy Cowall at 269/428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com.

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

We will NOT meet in August. The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 11 in the church lounge at 7pm. A study leader is needed for that meeting. Anyone who is interested, please call or text Melanie at 269/449-8399 or email melc2235@yahoo.com

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for at least 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy.
- Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On June 27, Saron members & friends Mary Alice Brunner, Mary & Mike Zylema, Pastor Joan, and Dave & Kathie Bradley were busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing and serving lunch to 100 guests. The meal included ham, rice, coleslaw, fruit, pickles, bread & homemade cookies. Thanks to our cookie bakers Kathi Anserello, Mary Kynast & Mary Alice Brunner.

If you are able to help with the preparation and serving, or by providing cookies, use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers.
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!

NOISY OFFERING

We receive a noisy offering
(or those not-so-noisy bills)
on the first Sunday of each month.
These gifts are sent to
ELCA World Hunger.

Thank you for your continued support!

EYE GLASS COLLECTION

Do you have any old glasses sitting in a drawer? Lions Club has provided a collection box in the narthex. We have several members who are Lions that can deliver our glasses to the club where they will do more good. Thank you!

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:

Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Lindsay Gaspari: 847/373-8826 or lindsay.gaspari@yahoo.com

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

The first step in getting involved, is getting informed. Register to receive their communications at https://swmichinterfaith.org/contact1

Support

The Support Committee typically meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 8pm via Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Ed Brunner at ebrunner54@gmail.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

Other Bits of News

Saron primarily runs on volunteer power. Our dedicated congregation often keeps things running so smoothly, we don't realize what's happening behind the scenes. But there is a lot happening and we all need to share the load.

As we begin transitioning to a new pastor, it is vital to have volunteer spots filled and filled EARLY to avoid the stress of last-minute assignments. Please use the links in the weekly email to fill a reader, usher, or building closer spot for NEXT week, or ideally NEXT month, rather than waiting until right before to see if we have a need for Sunday. This would be a huge help. Thank you!!!

In 2025, Saron will celebrate our 150th anniversary! This will be a big deal and a huge undertaking, with events throughout that whole year. The committee has been working on preliminary planning and has established an important date for your calendar.

- August 10, 2025 -

We will have a celebratory worship with Bishop Craig Satterlee at 10am, followed by a dinner at Union & Social, a beautiful venue in St. Joseph. More details to come in the future but keep this date open during your travel planning for next year!

Sunday, September 8 | 1pm – 3pm

We will again have two options for service projects – Readiness Center & The Boys & Girls Club. Lunch will be served after the 2nd service for those volunteering. Watch the weekly emails and bulletins for more information/sign-up.

To Infinity & Beyond:

God's Love Has No Boundaries

Monday, August 5 – Thursday, August 8
6:30pm – 8pm

It's not too late to join us for this fun and interactive Space themed VBS experience, targeted towards kids preschool through 5th grade. Click on the link in the weekly email to register. For planning purposes, we'd like to know ASAP. Walk-ins will still be warmly accepted.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As you are aware, Pastor's last service will be on Sunday, July 28. The official final step in the process of her retiring is an exit interview led by the synod, with council attendance. That meeting will take place Monday, July 29. Council will meet after that to form the call committee and dig into next steps, including creating our congregational profile. A typical call committee is 6-8 people, representing all the different facets of the church. The synod has developed a very complete document to help with the process. We are not in this alone – we will be provided all the help we need.

Bishop Satterlee believes our congregation has a lot of positives that will help attract candidates. We still need to be patient and let the process unfold. While interim pastors are no longer available, we already have a long-term supply pastor ready to get us started. Pastor Victoria Blough will begin on August 11. Pastor Chrisy Bright, assistant to the bishop, will preside before that, on August 4.

In short, we have a pastoral transition plan. We are in good shape, regardless of how long or short it takes to welcome a new permanent pastor. Contact me or one of the other council members with any questions or concerns.

Address for Synod document:
https://mittensynod.org/docs/CallProcessManual.pdf

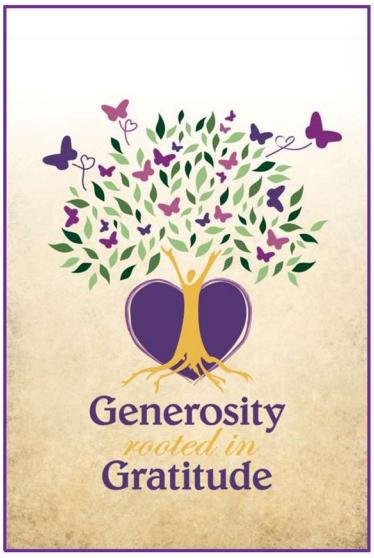
Till next Month, Joe Ulrey, 2024 Saron Council President.

Our congratulations to Kristin Romness and Nick DeLong who were married at Saron on July 20.

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

You may have noticed the Zoom Coffee Hour on Wednesdays has been taken off the calendar. With Pastor Joan's retirement, the decision was made to conclude that particular ministry, at least for the time being. Begun during the pandemic, it has been an important and enjoyable point of connection with folks. Thanks to all who have participated.

Stewardship – Call for Written Devotions



The Fall 2024 Stewardship Season is fast approaching, with a musical kickoff scheduled for September 29, 2024. Last fall's emphasis was on gratitude. This year we are taking that a step further by focusing on *"Generosity rooted in Gratitude."*

For the last two years, the weekly written devotions provided by members and friends were instrumental in Saron's Stewardship Season, so we are again asking for volunteers to pen inspirational messages that can be shared with the Saron community. Specifically, we are looking for individuals to write short devotionals similar to those found in the Augsburg Press' "The Word in Season." Or alternatively, one can submit a photograph or drawing (or both a devotion and a graphic) that reflects on a selected Bible passage of the week, to be provided when you express interest.

If you are interested in participating this year, please contact Carol Hafer (269-470-2255) or Kathy Bergh (906-290-3346) as soon as possible. Devotions should be submitted to Kathy by email (kathy.bergh960@gmail.com) no later than September 11, 2024. Thanks for your participation!

Stewardship is what we do after we say we believe.

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website:
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

AUGUST 2024 NEWSLETTER

SCHOOL SUPPLIES DRIVE

Be on the lookout for sales! Throughout August, we will once again be collecting school supplies for Lybrook Elementary School in Eau Claire.

Suggested items: pencils, crayons, markers, glue sticks, notebooks, folders, tissues, disinfecting wipes, white board markers, and gift cards to Meijer and Walmart.

AUGUST 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9:30am Bible Study	**2**	**3**
4 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour Pastor Chrisy Bright, Assistant to the Bishop	**5** 11am Prayer Group **Vacation Bible School - To Infinity & Beyond: God's Loves Has No Boundaries at 6:30pm-8pm**	**6** 6pm Bible Study	**7** 9am Helping Hands	**8** 9:30am Bible Study	**9**	**10**
11 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour Pastor Victoria Blough	**12** 11am Prayer Group	**13** 6pm Bible Study 8pm Support Meeting	**14** 9am Helping Hands	**15** 9:30am Bible Study	**16**	**17**
18 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour Pastor Victoria Blough	**19** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Council Meeting **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**20** 6pm Bible Study	**21** 9am Helping Hands	**22** 9:30am Bible Study **SOUP KITCHEN DAY**	**23**	**24**
25 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour Pastor Victoria Blough	**26** 11am Prayer Group	**27** 6pm Bible Study	**28** 9am Helping Hands	**29** 9:30am Bible Study	**30**	**31**